



# THE RAMON LLULL UNIVERSITY



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THE RAMON LLULL UNIVERSITY, THE FIRST PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN CATALONIA AND THE ONLY ONE IN THE WHOLE OF SPAIN, WAS BORN FROM THE WISHES OF THE CHURCH AND OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY.

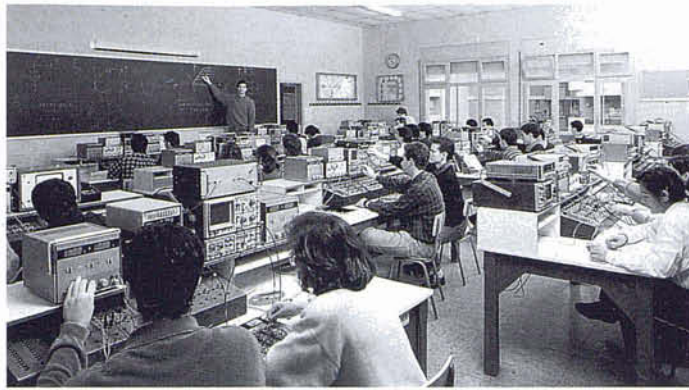
JOSEP M. COLL I D'ALEMANY PRESIDENT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD. UNIVERSITAT RAMON LLULL

**T**he first Catalan university, the Estudi General de Lleida, was founded in 1300 by James II the Just. Later came those of Barcelona, Girona, Tarragona, Solsona and Tortosa. The old Catalan universities came about thanks to the interrelation between the civil society and the Church. These centres, however, were abolished by Philip V's Decree of Nueva Planta in the eighteenth century and replaced by the much more centralist University of Cervera.

Today a new private university has been born from the combined wishes of the Church and the civil society. The Ramon Llull University (URL) was founded in 1990 and officially recognized by the Catalan Parliament's unanimous approval in May 1991. But the new university has not appeared out of nowhere. It has been established on a solid foundation of further education colleges of proven prestige and tradition in Catalonia: the Sarrià Chemistry College, the Blanquerna Tea-

cher Training School, the La Salle School of Engineering, the Faculty of Philosophy of Catalonia and the Ebre Observatory University College. These institutions, along with the Fundació Cercle d'Economia and a series of figures from Catalan civil society, make up the Board of the Foundation that set the University in motion under the presidency of Cardinal Narcís Jubany. The URL is the only private university in Catalonia and the first in the whole of Spain. As a private university it has





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the same right as the private universities to issue homologated and official qualifications, but on the other hand it gets no financial support from the government. Because of this a lot of the services it offers are paid for through contracts with businesses, student enrolment fees, technology transference and other sources.

The URL's priority is the *quality of its teaching*, with emphasis placed on content, but also on teaching methods, with the introduction of new techniques for didactic training and a close teacher-student relationship. This allows a more personalized education, first of all, as well as ensuring that both teacher and student feel motivated towards pedagogic and scientific production.

The URL is determined to treat its students as people rather than numbers. From the moment the student arrives at the university the emphasis is on a highly personalized contact, not through an abstract system of pre-inscriptions, but trying to orientate the individual. Then, once the student is part of the university, the aim is to maintain this contact on a person-to-person basis.

Other features of the University are:

*Private initiative*, which promotes further education without overcrowding, but at the same time far removed from economic elitism, applying a suitable policy of grants and scholarships according to the student's financial possi-

ilities, with a great spirit of solidarity. *Encouragement of research*, a vital factor in higher level university education, establishing a real link with the scientific and cultural world of our times. At the URL, research is seen as teaching and as a service to teaching. It is also seen as an obligation and a commitment to society. This why at the URL today, research and technology transference represents more than 300 million pesetas a year, a high figure for the number of students at this university.

*A European vocation*, at the service of the Catalan society and open to other cultures and ways of life in Spain, Europe and all over the world.

The university is and must be universal. Our universe doesn't end with Catalonia, it goes far beyond Spain and Europe. This is why the URL wants to establish relations with the world's universities, though obviously we have to start with those closest to hand, which are the Spanish and European universities.

Today we are taking part in the TEMPUS and ERASMUS exchange programmes with students and teachers all over Europe, and we have also established relations with teachers and researchers in the East.

Its *Christian inspiration*, since it promotes integral formation of the individual on the basis of a Christian conception of man, life and the world, based on Ramon Llull and his emblematic

Tree of Science, which forms the University's logo.

Integral training means that what we want is to form individuals, and the individual contains a number of dimensions. We do not want to produce people who are mutilated or deprived of one of these dimensions, which include professional, scientific, cultural and humanistic aspects and need to be harmoniously blended to yield the fullness of personal existence. Hence our insistence on a social and political dimension, not just on the family and the individual.

Christian inspiration must strengthen our roots in the Teachings of Jesus Christ –the choice we make as Christians. All this comes together, becomes integrated, structured... This leads to whole human beings, with all their faculties developed.

The URL is made up of a federation of further education establishments. At the moment, its courses are followed by more than 4,500 students. It has nine integrated colleges and one associated college.

The URL's main objectives for the immediate future are its consolidation as a university; gradual growth linked to the quality of its teaching; progress in its grants policy, allowing access to all; transference of technology to industry; the creation of employment pools in all its colleges and the promotion of scientific and social progress. ●